

REMARKS

Claims 26, 28-29, 33-41, and 43-45 are pending in this application. In this Response, Applicant has amended certain claims. In light of the Office Action, Applicant believes these amendments serve a useful clarification purpose, and are desirable for clarification purposes, independent of patentability. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the claim amendments do not limit the range of any permissible equivalents.

In particular, independent claim 27 has been rewritten to include the subject matter of claim 32. In addition, independent claim 42 has been canceled. Various dependent claims have also been amended or canceled to maintain consistency with the amendments and cancellations herein. As no new matter has been added, Applicant respectfully request entry of these amendments at this time.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's allowance of claims 34-41. In addition, Applicant appreciates the Examiner's recognition of allowable subject matter in claim 32 if rewritten in independent form. In response, Applicant has rewritten claim 27 to include the subject matter in claim 32. As such, Applicant believes all claims are in condition for allowance.

THE REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 26-31, 33, and 42-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,030,295 to Takeda in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,487,543 to Funk for the reasons set forth on pages 2-4 of the Office Action. Applicant strongly disagrees with the Examiner's rationale used in relating the irons of Takeda to the woods presently recited, at least for the reasons discussed in the Response to Office Action filed July 7, 2004.

In an effort to expedite allowance of the application, however, Applicant has amended the claims to incorporate the subject matter indicated to be allowable by the Examiner. Applicant maintains the right to file a continuing application to pursue the canceled subject matter.

CONCLUSION

All claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that the present amendments still do not resolve all of the issues regarding patentability of the

pending claims, Applicant invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorneys to discuss any remaining issues.

A Petition for Extension of Time is submitted herewith to extend the time for response two months to and including May 9, 2005. No other fees are believed to be due at this time. Should any fee be required, however, please charge such fee to Swidler Berlin LLP Deposit Account No. 195127, Order No. 20003.0067.

Respectfully submitted,
SWIDLER BERLIN LLP

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